

Step 2: How I currently use technology in the classroom in innovative ways.

Currently, I use computer technology in my first grade classroom in several ways. (However, I want to mention that if I had access to more technology I would use it. My vision is to have a **technology literate** classroom. I would like to have a classroom where students have access to computers during the majority of the instructional day. I am capable to teaching students more through technology than what I currently have available in my classroom.)

First, students receive instruction on how to use a computer properly. They learn how to turn on and off the computer to avoid losing information or causing unnecessary damage. They are instructed how to care for the computer's hardware by handling the keyboard and mouse gently.

Next, when students are able to handle computer equipment wisely they learn how to access the web sight for taking book tests. Our school uses the Accelerated Reading program through Renaissance Place. Students enjoy using the computer on their own to take book tests and therefore, they are motivated to read more books.

Additionally, students use computers for 30 minutes each day to improve phonemic awareness, phonics, and reading comprehension. The students use the program Waterford which is an innovative program tailored to the specific needs of each child. Students work at their own pace learning letters, letter sounds, blending, segmenting, and other vital skills necessary to read. Using this technology provides students with variation from normal whole class instruction. Students spend 15 minutes a day learning keyboarding skills using a computer based teaching program. The software program is bright and interactive. Students look forward to learning to type on the keyboard and express excitement in their progress.

I use my personal classroom computer to design specific worksheets to reinforce skills taught from textbooks. I use the Scholastic.com and Clipart.com to supplement and enhance curriculum in the classroom. I use a program called PLATO to enhance my classroom instruction in mathematics. Students use PLATO and performance and achievement scores have increased. PLATO is just another creative means to move students though math concepts past what the traditional textbook is covering. My students are always anxious to use PLATO.

I currently use the overhead projector to display reading passages and other text; however it does not engage the students to the level that a visual imaging device would.

Last year I was able to teach in a classroom that had a projector, screen, and ELMO unit. I prepared PowerPoint presentations on the Lewis and Clark expedition, Idaho Native Americans, and Idaho history. I used the ELMO to display maps of the Oregon Trail, pictures of famous Idahoans, and graphs found in reference books. Students were fascinated at the wealth of information presented to them. Their interest level rose because I was able to bring the world into the classroom through the computer and ELMO unit. I also used the software program Kidspiration. I was able to make custom templates that students could access and customize to their own liking using different colors, animals, and symbols.

This year, I feel that my teaching techniques could be more creative if I had access to more technology. Students could work in small groups, make class presentations and create projects for sharing. Currently, students share their writing through oral presentations; however, the ELMO is more creative in allowing students to see their work in print while others can view it! I have a unit on Literature Around the World. It focuses on different countries and stories that originate from far away places. The ELMO unit would make it possible to lay several books down for everyone to see, and we would be able to compare and contrast their literary elements.

Step 3: How the use of technology in the classroom has impacted student performance.

Our elementary school scored in the top 5% in the state for academics, and I believe it is partially due to the effective use of technology. We use **Waterford, Read Naturally** and **PLATO** to aid students in reading and math.

Students are fascinated by computer technology. They are eager to learn how to use computers when they begin school. Early exposure to computers helps students become comfortable and confident. My students who are using the **Waterford** program in developing reading skills work at their own individual pace. They do not compete against anyone else, and they have no knowledge what level others are working on in the program. Student performance is increased because they are not afraid to choose an answer and risk embarrassment that their answer is incorrect. They take risks because computers are forgiving! For students who may be shy or lacking in confidence the computer is their ideal friend and tutor. Additionally, I have observed students who are reluctant to speak up orally or who are distracted in my regular classroom setting enjoy being able to work independently at a computer.

The use of these technologies has certainly targeted these types of learners.

I have witnessed students using the numerous computer programs available to them, and expressing pride, which in turn increases their enthusiasm for learning. When my students use computers they feel a sense of accomplishment and independence. Computer based teaching through the use of these programs has been especially effective among at-risk students in my classroom. Their behavior is better when using computers, which increases their productive time in learning skills and concepts.

Students who finish necessary textbook work early are permitted to use the classroom computers. They self-regulate their speed of completing desk work because they want to work at a computer. As a result students are motivated to complete their deskwork, which in turn increases overall student performance.

Student performance in keyboarding has increased as students are exposed daily to typing concepts. First graders achieve automaticity in speed and accuracy because of this early exposure. Because technology engages students, they spend more time learning basic skills, which provides a strong foundation for education and an increase in self-esteem.

Step 4: How what I am proposing to purchase will enable me to use technology in an innovative manner to enhance learning opportunities for my students.

I am proposing to bring the world into my classroom through the use of a visual imaging device called an ELMO. I want to do this by using a laptop, projector, screen and ELMO unit to expose students to learning and visual experiences they would not otherwise have. I teach in a rural district comprised of low-income families. Students have minimal exposure to travel opportunities or cultural experiences, for example, the closest city containing an art museum is 120 miles away. The ELMO unit would enable me to display art work, maps, magazine articles, pictures, documents, artifacts, text, graphics, and other print resources on the classroom screen for the benefit of all students. In cases where only one copy of a book is available the ELMO would allow the image to be seen by all students.

The projector mounted to the ceiling of the classroom would connect directly to my desktop computer. Any educational image from the internet could be directly shown to all. I would use the projector to show PowerPoint presentations of Idaho standards in Social Studies, Health, Science, Math, and Language Arts. Internet sights shown through the projector could compensate for the lack of science, social studies and health textbooks in my classroom. The images or internet sights would be used additionally to ask questions, stimulate discussion, probe for student understanding and encourage convergent and divergent thinking, stimulating curiosity, and helping students to question.

Furthermore, I would use these items to display reading passages to build fluency, model writing techniques, and present a variety of genres of literature to engage students in choral reading as a whole class. Visual learning such as this increases student participation and performance because it keeps learners actively engaged.

The projector, screen, and ELMO unit would benefit many students because they would become permanent fixtures in the classroom for many years thus impacting the overall learning opportunities for numerous children. Having this technology added to our school would increase enthusiasm in other teacher and encourage them to become more computer literate. I would be available to be a computer mentor to my colleagues in the school.

The awarding of these needed technology items would surely bring the world closer to these deserving students.

Step 5: How what I am proposing to purchase will be used in innovative ways in the classroom.

The purchase of a projector, screen, and ELMO unit will allow me to design learning opportunities to meet the needs of diverse students in my classroom.

The projector and screen will allow me to create instructional opportunities that are adapted to many diverse learners. ELL students especially benefit from visual learning. The ELMO would allow me to display a variety of resources and visual objects to meet the educational needs of these students. I would be able to use materials projected to the whole class that meet the special needs of students with particular learning differences.

I would use the projector and ELMO to create lesson plans that reinforce student's cognitive processes associated with various kinds of learning such as critical and creative thinking, problem solving, invention, memorization and recall, all skills important to learning.

Additionally, this technology would provide classroom opportunities for cooperative learning, direct instruction, discovery learning, whole group discussion, independent study, and interdisciplinary instruction.

The use of technology such as this provides me with alternate teaching strategies and materials to achieve different instructional purposes and engage students in active learning opportunities. I would be able to develop a variety of clear, accurate presentations and representations of concepts, using alternative explanations and presentations to assist students' understanding while presenting diverse perspectives to encourage critical thinking. These skills are all valuable and necessary to student learning.

The ELMO unit is innovative because it decreases the need for each student to have a copy of a textbook or paper handout. The classroom comes alive with colored display of information. The projector would allow me to bring the internet into the teaching environment where students can discover much more than what I can present in a traditional way. The possibilities are endless.

Finally, I believe this technology encourages active engagement in learning. The use of technology in the classroom engages students in individual and cooperative learning activities that help them develop the motivation to achieve! This type of technology is desperately needed at our school. I believe students are missing valuable opportunities that this technology could provide.

This technology will help me maximize student learning to its greatest potential. I want to be a trendsetter in my school and show other teachers that technology in the class room is the wave of the future, and we must empower our students with the skills necessary to be computer literate today!

Qwest Foundation for Education Grant Expenditure Plan

| Activity | Salaries | Benefits | Contractual Agreements | Materials and Supplies | Capital Objects | TOTAL |
|--------------|----------|----------|---|--|--------------------|----------------|
| | | | *School district has agreed to cover the expenses of installation fees, wiring and set-up. | ELMO visual projection unit TT-0S2 | | 850.00 |
| | | | | Screen | | 399.00 |
| | | | | Projector | | 800.00 |
| TOTAL | | | | | | 2049.00 |